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ABSTRACT

The majority of Native American students in Arizona and New Mexico experience inferior elementary and secondary educations. They attend small rural schools with limited resources in remote locations on or near reservations. Poverty and unemployment rates are high. Northern Arizona University, the Navajo and Hopi Tribes, Northern Arizona Education Association, and the U.S. Department of Education have joined in a partnership to address these issues. The partnership supports a program to increase computer literacy and career awareness and to decrease dropout rates among rural educationally disadvantaged students. The school year component of the project features: (1) training of up to five teachers per school from seven target schools in the areas of high school retention, parent involvement, student career and personal development, and teaching of critical thinking skills; (2) on-reservation sessions to train parents to help their children academically and to deal effectively with teachers and the school district; (3) counseling and mentoring related to career and college preparation; and (4) installation of computer assisted instructional laboratories on the Navajo and Hopi reservations. The program's summer component, Nizhoni Camp, is a 5-week session at Northern Arizona University. This program introduces high school sophomores and juniors to the rigors of university life while improving specific skills identified as conducive to success in college. Nizhoni Camp's courses and workshops are described. (SV)

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# School, College and University Partnership

## BACKGROUND

Educational systems of the next century will be significantly different from those of today. Public education in the United States has entered a new demanding phase: For example, in 1986, several national task forces reported that "reform" of education is inadequate. The established public education system, they proclaimed, needs to be "transformed" into something quite different.

Among the states of the U.S., Arizona ranks 25th in total population, third in Native American population, and eighth in Hispanic population. The state is sparsely populated and characterized by a relatively large number of small, rural school districts and a few large urban school districts. There are over 200 school districts in the state of Arizona. The majority of these schools have significant numbers of students who are disadvantaged due to low socioeconomic level, the lack of proficiency in the English language, and migrant status.

The state is also characterized by rapid population growth, very young and very old sub-populations, a changing ethnic demography, and great differences in educational attainment correlated to ethnicity. Arizona's diversity, though responsible for the states' cultural richness, contributes significantly to the educators' dilemma in addressing all students' educational needs.

Arizona Revised Statues require the State Board of Education to implement a nationally standardized, non-referenced achievement exam program in reading, grammar, and mathematics for pupils in grades 1-12th. The national tests used were the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, for pupils in grades 1-8th, the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT-7) for pupils in grade 9, and the Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK) for students in grades 10-12th.

As a whole, Arizona public schools achievement test scores were at or slightly above the national average in thirty-three out of thirty-six testing categories. Analysis of the data by race and ethnicity have indicated that the Hispanic population generally outperformed the Black population in reading, language and mathematics across grades. The American Indian population obtained the lowest scores on reading, language and mathematics of all the racial/ethnic groups across all grades. Scores for this group were generally below, or well below the national averages.

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In the Navajo Nation, education (k-12) is the responsibility of four major educational systems represented today: Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, community-controlled contract schools, public schools, and mission schools. During the 1987-88 academic school year, a total of 240 schools served approximately 62,303 Navajo Nation students. (See Table 1 for breakdown for student enrollments)

Table 1. Navajo Nation Schools and Student Enrollment for 1986-87

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| BIA Agency Schools | 51 | 15,827 |
| Contract Schools | 9 | 3,450 |
| Mission Schools | 22 | 1,632 |
| Public Schools | 158 | 41,394 |
| Grand Total | 240 | 62,303 |

Historically, American Indians, Hispanics, and Blacks have been underrepresented in higher education in proportion to the population. Accounting for 33.4% of the population ages 5-17 in 1980, these groups combined comprised only 13.1% of college enrollments and 11.6% of graduate degrees in 1984-85.

As these disadvantaged populations move into the education system and work force, they have a greater opportunity and success in education. Unless the rate of success in education is improved, current trends point to lower levels of educational attainment for the state and greater disadvantages for these individuals and for the state in an increasingly competitive environment.

## THE NEED FOR A PARTNERSHIP

A recent report from the Carnegie Foundation's on colleges has indicated that:

> "the first problem we encountered is the discontinuity between schools and higher education. Today, educators from separate levels with few exceptions carry on their work in isolation....students find the transition from school to college haphazard and confusing....many young people who go to college lack basic skills in reading, writing, and computation"

Universities across the nation must accept the responsibility to assist talented secondary school students with disadvantaged backgrounds in order to assure their enrollment and success in post secondary education. The federal Department of Educations' University Partnership Program provides the opportunity for the development of such programs by bringing university and additional resources together to bear on the limited resources of certain schools

with high percentages of educationally and economically disadvantaged students.

One significant population of educationally disadvantaged students is the Native American student. The majority of Native American students in Arizona and New Mexico experience inferior elementary and secondary educations, attending small *rural* schools with limited academic resources in remote locations on/near reservations where students are often separated from their families. In addition to limited educational opportunities, the economic condition of Native American families is severely impaired. The 1982 Bureau of Indian Affairs Labor Force estimated that 31% of reservation American Indians over the age of 16 are unemployed. The unemployment rate of 33% for reservation Indians living in Arizona was even considered to be higher. Because of the ever growing need and concern to enhance and improve on the future of the people, a partnership program was developed.

This School, College & University Partnership (SCUP) program between Northern Arizona University, the Navajo and Hopi Tribes, Northern Arizona Education Association, and the Department of Education, Washington, D.C., engaged in a partnership to address these concerns. This partnership was established to provide a year-round program that would foster the academic achievement of educationally-disadvantaged students coming from remote and rural families in the areas of computer literacy, career awareness, and drop-out prevention. This unique program consist of an academic year component, and a five week summer program.

The project involves: 1) training for up to five classroom teachers per school for the seven target schools in the areas of high school retention, parent involvement, student career and personal development, and 2) the installation and operation of two computer-assisted instructional laboratories (CAIL), one on the Navajo reservation, and one on the Hopi reservation. At the conclusion of the academic year, there is an intensive five-week academic experience at Nizhoni Camp, on the campus of Northern Arizona University.

## ACADEMIC YEAR COMPONENT

The drop-out prevention component consist of providing test-taking skills, note-taking management, research skills, goal-setting, library skills, preparation for the American College Test and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (ACT/SAT), and to remit payment for the cost of either test for interested college-bound students.

The participating classroom teachers were selected by the program coordinators, and with the recommendations of the school principals or immediate supervisors. Teachers were trained to prepare a curriculum manual to help guide teachers on their reservations to teach the critical thinking skills that are so important both to school success and performance on tests of achievement and scholastic aptitude. During the spring 1990 semester, Northern Arizona University will be presenting three "Parent And Student Success" (PASS), sessions, one on the Hopi reservation, and two on the

Navajo reservation for parents of youngsters in the project schools. The parents will receive training on how to improve their child's study skills, how to monitor their child's homework and overall academic progress, effective communication strategies between parents and their children, comparison between Navajo way of discipline vs the schools style of discipline, and how to deal effectively and positively with their local school district, with specific emphasis on preparing for parent/teacher conferences.

The second component of the academic year component consist of Career and Personal Development. As part of the promotion and awareness of career opportunities available to minority and educationally-disadvantaged students, this area addressed the following: scheduling, providing crisis counseling, preparation of college applications, making application for financial aid, campus visitations, and a career fair. An active mentor/role program in the classroom is also a vital part of this component.

The third component is a Computer Assisted Instructional Laboratory (CAIL). The objectives of this component are to: 1) introduce students to basic computing skills, 2) enhance their reading and writing skills, and 3) institutionalize this computer-assisted instructional component in the participating sites by the end of the program's third year of operation. The main emphasis is primarily on increasing reading and writing skills, and secondarily, on enhancing achievement in mathematics and science.

## SUMMER COMPONENT: NIZHONI CAMP

The goal of Nizhoni camp is to introduce high school sophomores and juniors to the rigors of university life while improving their academic skills and motivation for learning in preparation for post-secondary education. As a college preparatory five-week summer program conducted on campus at NAU, this component introduced the high school participants to the rigors of university life while improving their academic skills,

The academic and residence life experiences were supplemented with extracurricular, cultural, and recreational activities that reflected all facets of university life. This combination provides an excellent opportunity for Native American high school students to prepare for college and set new goals for their future.

The uniqueness of Nizhoni camp lies in its academic program. More than 140 hours of instruction was provided in such content areas as mathematics, English, and Career Development with study skills, reading, and computer literacy instruction which was incorporated in each class instruction. Each course was designed to improve academic ability by focusing on the development of identified skills that were conducive to success in college. These included thinking skills, goal-setting, self-esteem development, values clarification, and study skills.

Instructors for the Nizhoni camp attended three weekend training sessions to include training in *cultural awareness* and *cooperative learning,* which promotes the use of group activities in the classroom

Within the past few years, a philosophy for content selection was developed through research on retention and transfer as well as classroom experimentation. Such curricular development is based upon the need for a student to master material, that is, have a thorough knowledge of course material that can be demonstrated by application or transfer to another situation. Thus, course content is very focused, with the idea of providing an "indepth" learning experience for students. The English composition course focused on sentence and paragraph structure, and students in the mathematics class worked solely on word problems, while the career development class exposed students to occupational opportunities with which they were previously unfamiliar. By limiting the focus of course content, the chance of improving a student's current learning patterns and knowledge in a five-week period was greatly enhanced.

Profile of Nizhoni Camp Participants.

There were 107 students that participated in the Nizhoni camp , with (72) sophomores, and (35) juniors, of this, (36) were males, and (71) were females. There were seven different tribes represented, and (37) different high schools represented from Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah. Seventy-eight percent of the participating school from which the students were selected were located on or near Indian reservations (see Table 2 for profile of participants).

Table 2. Profile of Participants

| | |
|---|---|
| Navajo | 92 |
| Hopi | 8 |
| White Mountain Apache | 2 |
| Colorado River Indian Tribes | 1 |
| San Carlos Apache | 2 |
| Acoma | 1 |
| Pima | 1 |
| TOTAL | 107 |

ACADEMIC PROGRAM ( NIZHONI CAMP)

English Composition and Mathematics Classes.

Two courses were developed for the English and Mathematics classes. The total classroom contact for the two foundation courses was (140) clock hours for the five-week period. These two classes met Monday through Friday for 2.0 and 1.5 hours per day respectively. In addition, students attended two hour seminars each evening Monday through Thursday.

The emphasis of the composition course was on essay writing and viewed as necessary for success at the freshman college level. These skills included critical thinking, knowledge of the writing process and mastery of the five-paragraph essay. Students also developed their reading, writing, and grammar usage skills. During the course of the five-week period, there was a total of (66) clock hours of classroom contact with the students.

Eighty-nine (89) percent of the students' English grades were average or above. The participants also completed a pre-test to determine their level of composition skills. A post-test was administered to determine the improvement level of these skills and final grades were awarded at the end of the program.

Mathematics Courses.

There were two levels of mathematics courses developed specifically for this program. A basic math (arithmetic), and math (algebra) class, specifically designed to meet the needs of the participants. The focus of each course was problem solving and reasoning skills necessary for mathematical thinking and understanding. The emphasis during the five-week period was on the application of techniques to solve a variety of word problems.

Career Development.

The total classroom contact time for this course was (38) clock hours during the five-week period. The course began with values, decision-making skills, and goal-setting exercises. The students also completed a "Self-Directed Search" to identify career interest areas, and researched occupational information on the Guidance Information System. This allowed the students to develop personal, educational and career goals. To enhance the education and career goals, guest speakers from the public and private sector were invited to make presentations in the classroom, and a Career and College Fair was conducted with more than 35 post-secondary institutions from Arizona, Utah, New Mexico, Colorado and New Hampshire were represented.

Integration of Skills.

To maximize the integration of reading, study skills, and computer literacy into the foundation courses, composition and mathematics, three one-day training sessions were conducted for the instructors to incorporate across-curriculum planning. Presentations by professionals included such topics as cultural sensitivity, cooperative learning, integration of study skills for different learning styles, reading, and computer literacy. The instructors met during the three days to develop the course descriptions, goals, and objectives, pre/post tests, and the evaluation process. The daily lesson plans reflected the utilization of study skills and the computer laboratory. Instructors were required to meet at least once a week to discuss weekly progress, daily assignments and levels of progress in each subject areas.

Head tutors and tutors attended four 2-hour training sessions to review various teaching methods and the course curriculum. The tutors were responsible for reviewing the students notebooks to ensure that the use of various study skills, note taking skills, and completion of homework and project assignments were completed.

Study Skills.

During the first week of the summer program, study skills workshops in note-taking, test-taking, memory and learning styles were introduced to the students. Time management was addressed in Career Development, and reading was a component in the composition course. To encourage the use of the various study skills in each subject area, the tutors and instructors reviewed student notebooks on a daily basis.

For more information on the academic year and the summer (Nizhoni) camp components, contact Dr. W. Sakiestewa Gilbert at Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Arizona.